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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to teach appropriate social skills to mainstreamed elementary students with disabilities. It was determined that mainstream classroom teachers did not have adequate knowledge of social skills to promote interaction and develop friendships between disabled students and their nondisabled peers. A social skills inservice training program was provided for 28 elementary classroom teachers and a social skills training program guide was disseminated, covering friendship, cooperation, feelings, aggression, and stress. Social skills activity lessons were conducted in the classroom for all disabled and nondisabled students. Classroom teachers were provided opportunities to consult with support staff who helped implement social skills training in the mainstream. Weekly parent support meetings were held to discuss social skills concerns. Interviews with teachers and a pre/post-implementation questionnaire completed by teachers supported the positive impact of the social skills training program. Eighty-five percent of 430 mainstream nondisabled students were able to demonstrate an understanding and respect for their disabled peers. Practicum objectives concerning interaction with nondisabled peers within the community and parents' joining of support organizations were not met. Appendixes contain copies of questionnaires and an outline of the training program. (Contains approximately 70 references.) (JDD)

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ED 375 579

Establishing Social Skills for Exceptional Needs Students and Their Nonhandicapped Peers in the Elementary Classroom Utilizing a Social Skills Training Program

by

Julie A. Haak

Cluster XXXXII

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Ronald H. Miller

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October 14, 1993
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This practicum report was submitted by Julie A. Haak under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

11-8-93
Date of Final Approval of Report

Barry Birnbaum, Ed.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Establishing Social Skills for Exceptional Needs Students and Their Nonhandicapped Peers in the Elementary Classroom Utilizing a Social Skills Training Program.
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Elementary Education/Special Education/Mainstreaming/ Integration/Normalization/Social Interactions/Peer Tutoring/Mentoring/Least Restrictive Environment/ Intervention Strategies/Inclusive Programming/Parent Involvement/Individual Education Plan/Parent Support Groups.

The goal of this eight month practicum was handicapped children would demonstrate appropriate social skills when interacting with nonhandicapped peers for the resolution of social skills concerns for exceptional needs children within their elementary school and community. Five broad objectives designed to achieve this goal were: (1) classroom teachers would become familiar with a social skills training program; (2) nonhandicapped students in the mainstream would demonstrate an understanding and respect for their nonhandicapped peers; (3) exceptional needs children would socially interact with their nonhandicapped peers; (4) parents and custodial caregivers of a child with special needs would attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings; and (5) families who had children with identified handicapped conditions would become members of a support organization related to their child's disability.

A social skills inservice training program was provided for elementary classroom teachers. A comprehensive social skills training program guide, in the areas of friendship, cooperation, feelings, aggression, and stress, was disseminated to classroom teachers. Social skills activity lessons were conducted in the classroom for all nonhandicapped and handicapped students. Weekly parent support meetings were held to discuss caregivers' social concerns of their exceptional needs child. Scheduling flexibility provided classroom teachers opportunities for support staff to consult and help implement social skills training in the mainstream.

Three of the five objectives of this practicum were achieved satisfactorily. Evidence documented in this practicum indicated that although two of the goals were not achieved at the levels anticipated, significant improvements were made. The positive outcomes of this practicum suggest that implementation of a social skills training program by the classroom teacher and other specialists could establish appropriate social skills for exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The work setting for this practicum is an elementary school, grades one through five, in a low socio-economic, midwest suburban area. The population consists of Southeast Asians, Black Americans, and Caucasians. Specifically, the school population consists of 460 pupils, of which 11 percent are Southeast Asians or Black Americans and 89 percent are Caucasian. The school is staffed with one principal, 28 certified teachers, and six paraprofessionals.

The school is a member of the second largest public school district in a midwestern state. The district serves 35,000 students and a population of 162,820 citizens residing in a 14 county metropolitan area. This district has dedicated itself to enable each individual pupil to become a productive, responsible, and fulfilled member of a complex, changing society regardless of sex, color, race, handicap, or nationality. The mission of the district is every student can learn. It prides itself in student learning and nurturing each pupil's desire to learn. The district provides effective and innovative instructional programs within a challenging, supportive and cooperative environment fostering student acquisition of knowledge and skills. Parents are highly

encouraged and provided with opportunities to be active partners in the education of their child.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer provides direct and indirect services for handicapped students, grades one through five, in the categories of mentally handicapped, physically handicapped, specific learning disability, other health impairment, and emotional/behavioral disorder. She services students in a combination of regular classroom and special education settings. The writer provides instruction to students in the areas of reading, math, language, functional/survival skills, and makes appropriate modifications to general classroom curriculum. Her responsibilities further include the planning and implementation of individual educational programs, conducting parent team conferences and chairs the weekly Multidisciplinary Child/Study Team. An area of the writer's expertise is screening special education referrals to evaluate the social and academic needs of the referred pupil. She holds both a Bachelor of Science Degree and Master's Degree in Special Education. The writer is certified to teach individuals grades Kindergarten through 12, with Mild to Moderate and Moderate to Severe Handicaps. She has 17 years of teaching experience and has served on various writing teams within the district. The writer is the building's

representative to the state department on Early and Middle Childhood. In addition, the writer is an active professional member in the Council for Exceptional Children.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem addressed in this practicum was that children with special needs did not possess appropriate skills in social situations to interact with their nonhandicapped peers. The writer's school district had adopted the model of inclusion for all handicapped children. Therefore, students with a handicapped condition had been placed into mainstream classrooms with their nonhandicapped peers, in their home school. Mainstream classroom teachers did not have adequate knowledge of social skills training to promote interaction and develop friendships between handicapped and nonhandicapped students.

Problem Documentation

The existence of this problem was documented by questionnaire responses from parents of handicapped children and informal interviews with mainstream teachers who had an identified exceptional child in their classroom. At the conclusion of the parent teacher conferences, conducted in April of 1992, parents of special education children were asked to respond to a short questionnaire which contained questions about their child's social behavior (see Appendix A).

Table 1

Parental/Caregiver's Responses to Social Skills Questionnaire, April, 1992

		Yes	No
1.	My child with exceptional needs plays with nonhandicapped peers in the neighborhood.	1	11
2.	My child with exceptional needs demonstrates appropriate social behavior at home.	1	11
3.	My child with exceptional needs participates in community activities, i.e. sports, girl/boy scouts, church groups, other _____.	0	12
4.	My child with exceptional needs, primary leisure activity at home is watching television.	12	0
5.	My exceptional needs child participates in after school activities.	1	11

Only 1 of the 12 respondents agreed that their exceptional needs child demonstrated appropriate social behavior at home. In response to the survey items, parents/caregivers of special education children enumerated that their child did not play with their

nonhandicapped peers in the neighborhood. Their total responses, 12 of the 12, identified television as their child's primary leisure activity at home. Their responses, 11 of the 12, overwhelmingly cited poor social skills which prevented their handicapped son or daughter from appropriate neighborhood and school involvement. Throughout the 1991-1992 school year, informal interviews were held with classroom teachers regarding the social skills of the special education student in the mainstream (see Appendix B).

Regular educators, 10 of the 28, viewed children with special needs as having friends. Interestingly, 6 of the 28, responded that exceptional children played with their nonhandicapped peers at recess. However, only 1 of the 28 classroom teachers agreed that exceptional needs students established social relationships with other peers. In review of their responses, 4 of the 28 viewed exceptional children to demonstrate appropriate social behavior. Their responses to the item that nonhandicapped children voluntarily choose a handicapped student for a partner or activity, only 5 of the 28 classroom teachers agreed. The main teacher consensus, 23 of the 28, viewed rejection of exceptional children by their nonhandicapped peers. Comments such as "He plays alone on the playground." and "Nobody wants to choose her

for a partner in class." are indicators of a lack of quality social skills.

Table 2

Regular Educators' Responses to Interview Statements, 1991-1992 School Year.

		Yes	No
1.	Children with special needs have friends.	10	18
2.	Exceptional children demonstrate appropriate social behavior.	4	24
3.	Nonhandicapped children voluntarily choose a handicapped student for a partner or team activity.	5	23
4.	Exceptional children play with their nonhandicapped peers at recess.	6	22
5.	Exceptional needs students establish social relationships with other peers.	1	27

Causative Analyses

The writer examined survey responses from parents and interviews with faculty members in regard to exceptional needs children and their lack of social skills. Their responses indicated several contributing factors for the stated problem. Traditionally, children with special needs had been educated within a segregated setting or isolated classroom with other handicapped peers. Extra curricular school programs have not had

adequate personnel to provide for supervision of special education children. Likewise, community programs experienced the same cognate. Children with special needs did not have program accessibility to interact with their nonhandicapped peers. Based upon current legislation exceptional needs children are being placed into the mainstream classroom at their home school. Social skills training for mainstream classroom teachers with handicapped children did not exist.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

There is substantial evidence from the literature to document that children with special needs experience social problems. Great attention and recognition of the need to educate all students, not just those labeled mildly and moderately handicapped has been addressed (Berres & Knoblock, 1987). According to Biklen (1985) exceptional children who are mainstreamed are likely to have social problems in the classroom with their nonhandicapped peers. Research conducted by Forest (1987) on children with exceptional needs found them to have a reduced number of relationships with their nonhandicapped peers. Knoblock (1982) cited similar patterns of social relationships between mentally retarded children and their nonhandicapped age-mates. Stainback and Stainback (1987) advocate the importance of educating all handicapped children in the mainstream.

However they recognized poor social skills as a primary problem for students with special needs. Strully (1986) similarly noted poor social skills among exceptional children but supported the importance and value of integrating students with handicapped conditions into the mainstream as the best practice in educating all children. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142) mandates that all handicapped children be educated in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent possible.

The literature also cites evidence to the problem that children with special needs are at risk for social rejection and do not possess accurate self-perceptions. Low social status is frequently attributed to children with learning disabilities (Larrivee & Horne, 1991). Schumaker, Hazel, Sherman, and Sheldon (1982), concluded that assumptions cannot be made for learning disabled students to inferentially learn appropriate social skills. A study conducted by Smith et al. (1982) addressed the low social status of handicapped students and the relationship between social and communication skills. Social relationships (i.e. verbal and nonverbal interactions) are frequently strained between exceptional children and their nonhandicapped peers. They appear to have difficulty understanding nonverbal communication (Bryan, 1977) as well as using verbal communication

(Bryan & Bryan, 1978). Results from their studies conveyed elementary learning disabled students in fourth and fifth grade classrooms to be significantly less socially accepted by their nonhandicapped peers. Peterson, Dammer, and Flavell (1972) suggest that learning disabled students miss subtle communication cues and mildly mentally handicapped children exhibit poor role taking. This inability to interpret nonverbal communication could account for inappropriate remarks, gestures, and actions on the part of the learning disabled student (Goldman & Hardin, 1982; Smith, 1978). Axelrod (1982) attempted to investigate the use of standardized social tests to measure social deficiencies of learning disabled adolescents. Results from the study confirmed that children with learning disabilities in grades 8 and 9 exhibited significantly lower nonverbal social perception skills than their nonhandicapped peers. Social skills deficits are viewed as one of the disorders associated with learning disabilities (Kavanagh & Truss, 1988). Mildly handicapped students may not be able to perceive their nonhandicapped peers' dislike for their inappropriate behavior, and nonhandicapped students may be unable to comprehend the individual needs and problems of a mildly mentally handicapped child (Kitano, Steihl, & Cole, 1978).

Several researchers (Bryan & Bryan, 1977; Gresham, 1981; Strain & Kerr, 1981) have found that handicapped students, both learning disabled and mildly mentally handicapped are frequently rejected, teased, or consciously ignored by their nonhandicapped peers in the regular classroom. The exceptional needs child is generally unpopular with their nonhandicapped peers and exhibits socially inappropriate behavior (Bryan, 1974a, b; Bryan, 1976; Siperstein, Bopp, & Bak, 1978). Additional research conducted by Bruininks (1978a) confirmed the results reported by Bryan (1974, 1976) that elementary learning disabled students in the mainstream classroom ranked lower in peer status. Results of research addressing social behavior and peer acceptance among children with special needs suggest that these students, grades K-12, engage in more rejecting and negative interactions with their nonhandicapped peers and are more likely to be isolated in social classroom interactions (Gresham & Reschly, 1986). They have fewer friends than nonhandicapped children and acquiring new friends in the mainstream classroom is difficult (Morrison, 1981). According to Morrison, Forness, and MacMillan (1983), deficits in the areas of friendship-making skills, empathy, and social conversational abilities are likely to have a negative impact on the ability of an exceptional needs child to

establish relationships that will provide them with needed support. Their research study results concluded that exceptional needs children have deficits in parent, teacher and peer rated social skills which span both home and school environments.

The data collected by Gresham and Reschly (1986) indicate that nonhandicapped peers perceived students with learning disabilities to exhibit fewer positive social behaviors and that they preferred not to work with them on academic tasks. Bryan (1974b) administered a sociometric scale to ascertain social acceptance and rejection of children with learning disabilities in the classroom. The results indicate that students with learning disabilities received fewer votes for social acceptance and more votes for social rejection than their nonhandicapped peers. Also, important to note from the data, was that learning disabled males and females were rejected more often than black students, of either sex, with a learning disability. Dudley-Marling and Edmiaston (1985) also concluded that children with learning disabilities were less accepted not only by their peers, but by their parents and teachers as well.

The special education student also has a less accurate perception of their social status within the classroom than their nonhandicapped peers (Bruininks, 1978). The researcher found that boys with a learning

disability rated themselves higher in social status in the mainstream classroom than their nonhandicapped peers of the same sex. In addition, Bryan's (1974b, 1976) research concludes that learning disabled students are less socially accepted than nonhandicapped students in the mainstream classroom. Students with learning disabilities tend to have lower social status than their nondisabled peers (Madge, 1990). Research indicates that there is a positive correlation between achievement and self-esteem (Duncan & Biddle, 1974). Beltempo (1990) found a high correlation between learning disabilities and low self-concept.

Empirical documentation of the effects of social integration of mildly mentally handicapped children with their nondisabled peers has produced mixed results. Earlier studies on the physical integration of mentally handicapped students do not point to beneficial effects (Fredericks, et al., 1978). MacMillan, Jones, and Aloia (1974) found mentally handicapped children to be less often accepted and more often rejected than their nonhandicapped peers. Gottlieb and Leyser (1981) concluded from their research of attitudes of nonhandicapped children toward mentally handicapped peers that they viewed exceptional needs children as being less capable and assertive and saw them as least physically attractive. It also has been found that mildly mentally

handicapped students are more socially isolated from their peers in the mainstream (Asher & Taylor, 1981). In support of this, data from studies observing behavior of exceptional needs children grades pre-K through 12, suggest that nonhandicapped children interact more frequently among themselves than with handicapped students in mainstreamed settings (Peterson & Haralick, 1977; Porter, Ramsey, Tremblay, Iaccobo & Crawley, 1978). In general, the literature reveals that mere social integration of exceptional needs children into the mainstream classroom does not yield positive results.

According to Gottlieb and Leyser (1981) the uninvolvement of exceptional students with the daily class routine decreases the likelihood of their social integration with nonhandicapped peers. The mandate of Public Law 94-142 has resulted in growing criticism regarding services for students with special needs (Lipsky & Gartner, 1987). The issue is the limited commitment of resources to support teacher efforts to develop instructional and social strategies in regular mainstream classrooms for exceptional children and their nonhandicapped peers. A theme that remains constant throughout the literature is that when regular educators do not receive appropriate instructional and social skills training, they will not be able to successfully meet a wide variety of student needs in the regular

mainstream classroom (Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage, & Jaben, 1985). The literature review also cites limited utilization of social interventions for children with special needs in the regular education classroom (Walker et al., 1983).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was handicapped children would demonstrate appropriate social skills when interacting with nonhandicapped peers within their community. A secondary goal was to provide elementary teachers with training strategies to establish social skills for exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers.

Behavioral Objectives

Upon completion of the 32nd week implementation period for this practicum, it was projected that the following objectives would be achieved.

1. The school staff of 28 classroom teachers would become familiar with a social skills training program to establish appropriate interactions between a handicapped individual and their nonhandicapped peers, as measured by a ten item questionnaire (see Appendix C).
2. Three hundred thirty five of the 390 nonhandicapped students in the mainstream, would demonstrate an understanding and respect for their handicapped peers as assessed from

teacher observations, student interviews, and a five item survey (see Appendix D).

3. Thirty of the 40 identified exceptional needs children would socially interact with their nonhandicapped peers within their community as reported by their caregivers, based upon a community involvement questionnaire administered by the writer (see Appendix E).
4. All parents and custodial caregivers of a child with special needs would be provided the opportunity to attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings, following the implementation of the inservice training session to discuss social concerns of their child, participating in a minimum of 5 out of 8 follow-up sessions, as recorded by the facilitator.
5. Thirty of the 40 families who had children with identified handicapped conditions, would become members of a support organization related to their child's disability and would participate in local/state meetings documented by interviews with parents by the writer.

Measurement of Objectives

The outcomes were measured by several assessment instruments. Classroom teachers were given a questionnaire prior to the pre-implementation of the social skills training program and at the conclusion of the practicum. This data was compared and analyzed. Upon completion of the implementation of a social skills training program, in the mainstream classroom, nonhandicapped students were given a five item survey to assess their understanding of appropriate social skills in regard to children with special needs. Parents and students were interviewed by the writer to ascertain the frequency of social integration of children with exceptional needs in school and within the community. Attendance of caregiver participants was tallied at monthly social skills support meetings. At the completion of the practicum parents who had a child with a handicapping condition were asked to complete a survey to identify their membership and participation of attendance in a support organization related to their child's disability. A daily journal was also kept by the writer to record any unexpected problems or events. Classroom teachers and parents had appropriate accessibility to discuss any unexpected concerns or problems with the writer.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Exceptional needs children in the mainstream classroom do not exhibit appropriate skills in social situations to interact with their nonhandicapped peers. Mainstream classroom teachers have received minimal social skills training to promote interaction and develop friendships between handicapped and nonhandicapped students. Many professionals concur that to provide exceptional needs students with success, integration activities, both academic and social, must be structured more systematically, and that handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers require teacher guidance and encouragement (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Bricker, 1978).

Prominent experts in the field of education are pressing for legislation to establish a general education system that is more inclusive and that would better serve all students particularly individuals who require additional educational support service (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Zins, Curtis, Graden, & Ponti, 1988). Throughout the review of literature one theme remains constant: Public Law 94-142 presents a logical opportunity to implement the inclusion of all students into the mainstream classroom as opposed to the past era of exclusion. Research conducted by professionals has

continued to validate that students with severe and profound disabilities are best educated within the mainstream class setting (Sapon-Shiven, Pugach, & Lilly, 1987). Similarly Turnbull and Schulz (1979) stressed that the instructional responsibility for a child with special needs should be shared with regular educators and parents. Every child should be considered to learn in most environments irregardless of their handicapping condition with the adjustment of classroom organization and the implementation of appropriate instructional programs (Wang & Birch, 1984).

Constructive classroom interventions are needed that require handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers to interact with each other in a positive way (Johnson & Johnson, 1982). Direct instruction is essential for social development for the special needs student in the mainstream classroom (Gresham, 1984). Implementation of social skills procedures with exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers will raise their self-esteem and thrust them to further interact with the environment (Stainback & Stainback, 1981).

Peer acceptance can have a tremendous effect on academic performance and self-concept (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1983), and a positive relationship between peer status and academic achievement (Lilly, 1970). In support of

this, research conducted by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), social skills training in the mainstream contributes to an individual's ability to cope with life stress. Attributes of social skills training programs provide handicapped students key opportunities for social interaction, provision of social feedback, and the provision of information regarding roles, skills, and norms based on direct performance accomplishments or mastery in the regular classroom (Buhrmeister, 1990; Ladd, 1990). Since a good socialization with peers is based on liking and accepting oneself, changing the quality of interactions between teachers and peers is essential to enhancing self-worth and fostering greater social acceptance for the mainstreamed exceptional needs student (Pollrstok, 1986). Kirby and Toler (1970) found that contingent upon the implementation of social skills intervention strategies, the behavior of nonhandicapped peers can be changed so that a favorable attitude is held toward the exceptional student.

Numerous programs are available to help the classroom teacher facilitate the social development of special education students and their nonhandicapped peers (Walker et al., 1983). The literature continually stressed that the instructional responsibility for a child with special needs should be shared with regular educators and parents (Wang & Birch, 1984). A variety of

methods exist for educators to encourage positive social interactions such as behavioral procedures, social skills training, training of nonhandicapped students, and cooperative learning. Techniques utilized for social skills instruction for handicapped and nonhandicapped students include modeling, coaching, behavioral rehearsal, verbal instruction and teacher prompting to elicit appropriate social behavior. A body of literature exists to describe these techniques in detail (Gottlieb & Leyser, 1981; Gresham, 1981; Strain, Kerr & Ragland, 1981). These researchers suggest that exceptional needs students display fewer positive social behaviors than their nonhandicapped peers. Therefore Gresham and Reschly (1988) concluded that social skills should be systematically taught as early as possible to improve children's social skills. Eventually handicapped children will need to demonstrate appropriate social skills crucial for social acceptance in mainstream classroom settings (Gresham, 1984). In addition a focus should also be placed on the behavior of nonhandicapped children in the mainstream setting in terms of fostering their involvement in initiating and reinforcing positive social skills with their handicapped peers (Strain et al., 1984).

The preceding discussion of possible solution strategies advocate that performance-based learning

experiences can be used to teach social skills to exceptional needs children and their nonhandicapped peers. The key component is that these teaching strategies take place in the mainstream classroom in order to facilitate and promote positive interactions and acceptance between handicapped children and their nonhandicapped peers. Hoffman, Ushpiz, and Levy-Shiff (1988) confirm that social skills support is related to target outcomes such as social competence, positive adjustment, and self-esteem. Overall, the conclusion is that appropriate social skills can be taught to handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers.

Description of Solution Selected

On the basis of the preceding bibliographic research, the writer concluded that providing social skills training to elementary classroom teachers was the most viable way to intervene with exceptional needs students experiencing social interaction difficulties in the mainstream classroom. Therefore, educational innovations in this practicum included the development of a social skills training program, inservice training for teachers, and the instruction of appropriate strategies and techniques related to establishing social skills for exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers in the elementary classroom.

Classroom teachers and all students did participate and were actively involved in weekly social skills training activity lessons. Classroom teachers were creative with the social skills topics and involved members of the community in some activity lessons. Interaction with handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers occurred during these classroom experiences and expanded to other activities within the community. Parents and caregivers of an exceptional needs child had the opportunity to meet monthly, as a group, to discuss any social skills concerns of their child.

Report of Action Taken

Prior to the implementation of the practicum, the writer met with the supervisor to discuss the scope and sequence of the elementary social skills training program. The writer then met with five classroom teachers representing grades one through five within the building to develop a social skills training program. Upon support of the supervisor, the writer established a flexible daily schedule which provided regularly scheduled blocks of time to assist with the implementation or consultation of the social skills training program in the mainstream. A summary of the action taken in implementing the plans and strategies

designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the practicum follows:

Month I

Week I

Prior to the social skills inservice questionnaires were distributed to classroom teachers to complete and return to the writer. A staff inservice was held on December 22, 1992 to discuss a social skills training program to promote appropriate social skills of exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers. The writer disseminated a copy of the training program to classroom teachers (see Appendix F). Dialogue between the writer and her colleagues clarified any concerns or comments in regard to the list of topics, skills, and activities in the social skills training program. Teaching techniques were addressed in the areas of instructional procedures, i.e. modeling, prompting, and motivational strategies. The plan of action was discussed and agreed upon. The writer's supervisor directed all classroom teachers to follow the guide, focusing on topics as noted by the skill progression for one 30 minute session per week.

Week II

The writer communicated to parents/caregivers with exceptional needs children that there would be a meeting at school in the Media Center from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. the

first Thursday of every month, to discuss their child's social skills. The agenda for the meetings would be open for discussion and monthly topics would be determined by the participants.

A teacher of second grade approached the writer in regard to a Moderate to Severe Handicapped (MSH) child who appeared to be socially isolated from his peers. The teacher wanted her class to recognize and value individual differences of every child in the room. The writer teamed with the classroom teacher and helped to implement Skill 1, accepting and getting along with people who are different. The topic was friendship. Through class discussion, the writer and teacher asked each class member to identify one special thing about his or herself. This generated a list on the chalkboard. Closure was brought to the discussion imparting to students that there is something special about everyone.

Week III

The same second grade teacher approached the writer in regard to the MSH exceptional needs child. The teacher wanted to encourage the exceptional needs child to utilize sign language in the classroom to identify herself to other nonhandicapped peers. The topic for the week was friendship and the skill was introducing oneself. The MSH student was developmentally delayed in speech and language. The writer corroborated with the

building's speech clinician. The clinician teamed with the mainstream teacher and implemented the skill utilizing discussion, sign language, modeling, and role-playing. At the conclusion of the session all of the nonhandicapped students could sign "Hi" and verbally introduce themselves to the MSH child. Through repetition and prompting the exceptional needs student could introduce herself to a nonhandicapped peer utilizing sign language.

Week IV

The writer continued to outline and post her weekly schedule, to be available for consultation, either within or outside of the classroom. There were no teacher requests for assistance for the week's topic of social skills. The skill topic was initiating conversation with peers utilizing discussion, modeling and role-playing.

Month II

Week I

The writer conducted the first monthly social skills meeting for parents/caregivers of special education children. Twenty eight parents/caregivers of special education children attended the meeting. There was no specific agenda for the session. The writer introduced herself and noted that the purpose of the monthly meetings was to identify any social skills concerns or topics relevant to their exceptional needs child.

Members of the group took turns introducing him or herself and their child's disability. Participants were enthusiastic. The writer encouraged the group to brainstorm about three or four social skills issues relevant to their special needs child. The group identified the following topics: appropriate social behavior skills, leisure activities, and community involvement.

Two fourth grade teachers discussed with the writer concerns they had regarding three students and their noncompliance to end conversations with peers. We discussed the skill of ending a conversation with peers. The writer teamed with the two other teachers and presented a skit to both classes utilizing role-playing. Both classes were challenged by their teachers to appropriately end a conversation with their peers. Class behavior was charted. Goal attainment was rewarded with an appropriate earned free time video.

Week II

During this week the writer was invited by a first grade teacher to team teach the skill topic joining an activity or group. The writer and the teacher conducted a class discussion on "joining in." The writer recorded student tips on how to join an activity. Members of the class decided that one would have to decide if he or she would want to join in. Secondly one would need to decide

what to say. Most importantly the individual would need to say it in a nice and friendly way. Upon teacher directives students were encouraged to play a leisure game of their choice with three other peers.

Week III

The writer approached a third grade teacher to team teach the social skills topic for the week on friendship, focusing on accepting peer's suggestions for group activities. The teacher respectfully declined the writer's offer. There were no teacher requests for social skills training assistance in the mainstream.

Week IV

A second grade teacher enlisted the writer to help implement the social skill topic of cooperating with peers to allow for small group instruction. Utilizing direct instruction and modeling the writer discussed the importance of cooperative behavior, such as helping or working with others in a small group of two or more to accomplish a specific task for the benefit of the entire group. The mainstream teacher and the writer continued to teach small groups with a reading curriculum lesson incorporating cooperative learning. The writer instructed handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers to choose a partner and listen to their peer read a share sheet, remembering to direct, check, and praise their work.

Month III

Week I

The regularly scheduled meeting for parents/caregivers with special needs to discuss social skills was held. The writer chaired the discussion which focused on the topic of appropriate social behavior skills of an exceptional needs child in relation to their agemates. The topic generated lively discussion. Many parents/caregivers voiced the opinion that it is easier to lower their social expectations for their exceptional needs child because it can avoid a conflict situation. Other group members relayed tips to those participants, which would encourage appropriate social behavior skills of a special needs child.

A fifth grade teacher approached the writer for possible strategies for nonhandicapped students in his classroom to help a visually impaired student with classroom activities. Conclusions from the conversation prompted the writer to enlist the Public Health Nurse to inservice both sections of fifth grade on physical, visual, and auditory health problems that some children experience. Paraprofessional support service was made available, at various times of the day, to model appropriate strategies to help both students with or without a handicapping condition with a classroom activity.

Week II

There were no requests from mainstream classroom teachers this week. The writer was approached by the speech clinician to team teach a developmentally delayed language group of third graders. The skill was giving a compliment to a peer. The writer and the speech clinician engaged the methodology of role-playing giving a compliment to a peer. From intense teacher prompting and modeling students were able to give a compliment to a peer at the conclusion of the session.

Week III

The writer continued to provide support instruction to the speech clinician and the third grade group of language delayed students. The skill topic was accepting a compliment from a peer. The writer and the speech clinician incorporated the activities of discussion, modeling and role-playing for the social skill topic. Upon prompting from the writer and speech clinician the group of language delayed students could accept a compliment from a peer.

Week IV

The writer consulted with a teacher of grade two. The teacher had a student new to the building from a different district. The student did not make friends easily and found it difficult to share school materials with other peers. Strategies were discussed with the

teacher. The writer teamed with the teacher to implement the social skill topic, through discussion and role-playing in the mainstream classroom. The new student was placed on a behavior management plan and was monitored by a paraprofessional at the close of each school day.

Month IV

Week I

The writer conducted the monthly social skills meeting for parents/caregivers of special education children. The writer summarized participant comments from the previous monthly meeting regarding appropriate social behavior skills of an exceptional needs child in relation to their agemates. Certain members volunteered that they took a "risk" and allowed their child to interact with their nonhandicapped peers at the local park. They were surprised and overwhelmed that nonhandicapped children playing at the park did not tease their child with special needs. Other participants shared that they had increased their social behavior skills expectations of their exceptional needs child. Results reported by parents were not only a shock to themselves but to their exceptional needs child as well. The meeting was humorous, and also began to build as a support group for parents and caregivers with a special needs child.

The writer teamed with each of the four first grade teachers to demonstrate the skill topic of apologizing to a peer or person of authority. The writer and classroom teachers modeled the topic content displays in the environments of school, and a peer group, i.e. the writer apologizes to the principal for a broken window, and the writer apologizes to a friend for name calling. The skill was instructed through modeling, role-playing, and small group discussion.

Week II

During this week, the writer was asked to team with the student social advocate teacher for a group of "at risk" students, in grades four and five. The social skill topic was making an appropriate choice and managing free time. The writer had students draw a "choice" written down on a piece of paper from a jar. Students determined if it was an appropriate choice or not in the management of their free time. The activity included lively honest discussion.

Weeks III and IV

There were no teacher requests for assistance regarding social skills training.

Month V

Week I

The social skills monthly meeting was held for parents/caregivers of special education children. The

writer addressed group members regarding the social skills topic of leisure activities and their exceptional needs child. The discussion was intense. Many parents/caregivers of a child with special needs voiced concerns of accessibility to leisure activities for their son or daughter. Leisure activities that were in existence were generally for exceptional needs children and were limited in availability. At the close of the meeting the consensus of the group was to continue this topic for discussion at the next meeting.

The writer concluded the week's skill topic lesson for all fifth grade girls focusing on knowing your feelings. The session incorporated role-playing and the thrust of the discussion was on sexual harrassment.

Week II

The writer regretably notes that a fourth grade student perished in an automobile accident. All available psychologists and student social advocates were summoned for counseling of students. The writer was also available for individual students to express and recognize their feelings. The week was highly emotional.

Week III

The writer teamed with second grade teachers on the skill topic of feelings. Through role-playing, the discussion centered on feeling sorry for others when bad things happen to them.

Week IV

Fifth grade teachers conferenced with the writer regarding the skill topic of aggression. Due to the increase of violence in the community, a team decision was made, and the writer invited the school police liason officer to conduct the session. The police officer made two class presentations on responding to peer pressure.

Month VI

Week I

The regularly scheduled monthly social skills meeting was held for parents/caregivers of special education children by the writer. The topic discussed was a continuation from the previous month on the social skills topic of leisure activities and children with special needs. The writer observed from comments shared in the discussion that members of the group were networking with one another outside of the monthly social skills meeting sessions.

The writer worked cooperatively with first grade teaching staff and created a puppet show to address the skill topic of aggression. The puppet show portrayed appropriate behavior in recognizing and dealing with an individual's anger. The puppet show generated much class discussion on the topic.

Week II

First grade teachers requested that the writer serve as the mediator of class discussions directly following a puppet show. The show content focused on the skill topic of aggression and dealt with another peer's anger.

Week III

The writer did not receive any requests from school staff members to assist with social skills training.

Week IV

The writer mediated social skills training in two fifth grade classrooms. Students participated in role-playing dealing with the skill topic of aggression and avoiding trouble with others.

Month VII

Week I

The writer hosted the monthly social skills meeting for parents/caregivers of special education children. Participants returned to this meeting with names of individuals and community contacts, to lobby for inclusion in leisure activities that are offered to nonhandicapped children. The discussion was energetic.

The writer received no requests from teachers to assist with social skills training in the classroom. However, a meeting was held with the writer's supervisor to discuss a final activity that would bring closure to the social skills training program for the entire school

population. The writer's principal was supportive of this paradigm. He contracted the theatrical company entitled, Theatre In A Trunk, for an all school lyceum to be conducted at the conclusion of the social skills training program calendar plan.

Week II

The writer assisted a second grade teacher to implement social skills training on the skill topic of aggression and appropriate responses when hit or pushed by peers. The writer and teacher utilized role-playing, which generated great dialogue and interaction between students and staff.

Week III

The physical education teacher recruited the writer to team teach one class per grade level in the building. The social skill topic was stress and how to display appropriate sportsmanship after the game. The writer incorporated the cooperative activity of playing "Three-sided Soccer." The skill was attained through active physical participation and discussion.

Week IV

The writer assisted the student social advocate teacher with small groups of students who appeared to have low self-esteem, at each grade level. Discussion and role-playing were implemented to target the skill topic of stress and responding to failure. The writer

and the student social advocate teacher devised a schedule for the small groups of students, at each grade level, to have lunch with them in the conference room during the week.

Month VIII

Week I

The final monthly social skills meeting for parents/caregivers of special education was held with no specific agenda. Members of the group participated in a pot luck supper. At the conclusion of the meeting, parents/caregivers were asked to respond to interview statements in regard to their child's social integration within the community.

Upon request by a third grade teacher, the writer team taught the social skill topic of stress. Role-playing brought about a class discussion centered on being left out of an activity or group.

Week II

With the assistance of the writer's supervisor an all school program was held in the gym, presented by "Theatre In A Trunk." The thrust of the lyceum focused on accepted individual differences, feelings, making friends, and having respect for all people. The program length was 35 minutes. There was a high level of interaction between the performers and the audience.

Also, the writer conducted interviews with students in the mainstream. A five item survey was administered to nonhandicapped students in the classroom in regard to their understanding of their handicapped peers.

Week III

A staff meeting was chaired by the writer to ascertain the effectiveness of the social skills training program. Surveys were distributed to classroom teachers for program evaluation.

Week IV

The writer evaluated the number of social skills training sessions that were taught. The writer also analyzed and evaluated data collected in relation to the social skills training program for handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers.

It is important to note that the writer was recruited by her supervisor to serve as a member on the teacher assistance team during the eight month implementation of this practicum. Also there was one deviation encountered from plan of implementation. The calendar plan needed to be extended due to the school district's scheduled summer vacation.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISSEMINATION

Results

The problem that existed in this writer's work setting was that children with special needs did not possess appropriate skills in social situations to interact with their nonhandicapped peers. Traditionally children with special needs had been educated within a segregated setting or isolated classroom with other handicapped peers. The school district had adopted the model of inclusion for all handicapped children. Therefore exceptional needs students had been placed into mainstream classrooms with their nonhandicapped peers in their home school. The problem existed because elementary mainstream classroom teachers did not have adequate knowledge of social skills to promote interaction and develop friendships between handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers.

The solution to this problem was to develop a guide of strategies to include specific social skills topics that would promote appropriate interaction between exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers. During an extensive social skills inservice elementary classroom teachers each received a copy of the social skills guide. Elementary classroom teachers participated in an intense workshop where theory was put

into practice. The inservice experience allowed classroom teachers to adequately study the social skills guide and techniques needed to develop, implement, and evaluate a quality social skills activity lesson for handicapped and nonhandicapped students.

Specific objectives were designed to achieve these goals. The following list includes each objective and the results related to the objectives:

Objective 1: It was projected that during the eight month practicum elementary classroom teachers would become familiar with the social skills training program to establish appropriate interactions between a handicapped student and their nonhandicapped peers. Actual results of the outcome depict 28 of the 28 elementary classroom teachers did participate in the social skills training program to establish appropriate interactions between a handicapped student and their nonhandicapped peers.

The success of this objective must be attributed to the dedicated commitment of teachers to implement weekly social skills activities within their classroom. Social skills activity lessons presented in the mainstream classrooms were outstanding. Classroom teachers collaborated with one another and tapped into community resources for social skills class activities and presentations.

Prior to the social skills inservice, on December 22, 1992, teachers were asked to complete a pre-implementation questionnaire on exceptional needs students' social skills.

Table 3

Questionnaire on Exceptional Needs Students' Social Skills

Check either pre- or post-implementation.

_____Pre-Implementation _____Post-Implementation

Directions: Circle the answer that correlates most closely with your views for each of the statements below.

		Yes	No
1.	A special education child can begin a conversation with their non-handicapped peers.	2	26
2.	An exceptional needs child can join in playing a game with their non-handicapped peers.	1	27
3.	A student with special needs can share items in the classroom with their nonhandicapped peers.	3	25
4.	An exceptional needs child can express their feelings.	4	24
5.	A special education student can deal with another's (peer or authority) anger.	1	27

(table continues)

		Yes	No
6.	A student with special needs demonstrates appropriate sportsmanship.	5	23
7.	An exceptional child can stay out of fights.	20	8
8.	A special education student can accept consequences.	19	9
9.	A child with special needs can offer help to a classmate.	1	27
10.	An exceptional needs student can apologize.	16	12

From Table 3 it can be seen, prior to social skills inservice, that teachers viewed exceptional needs students to exhibit inappropriate social skills. Significantly, only 2 of 28 teachers viewed exceptional needs students with appropriate conversational skills. Overwhelmingly, 27 of 28 respondents could not perceive or had not observed a handicapped student joining in a game with their nonhandicapped peers. Their responses further indicated that special education students have difficulty with feelings, sharing with peers, and offering help to a classmate. Interestingly, questionnaire teacher responses did not view exceptional needs students as behavior problems. Classroom teachers indicated that special education students could

apologize, accept consequences, and stay out of fights. The majority of the elementary teachers had not had social skills training to establish social skills for exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers in the classroom.

At the conclusion of the eight month practicum, teachers were asked to respond to the same questionnaire that was administered prior to the implementation of social skills training. A distinct contrast could be made upon completion of social skills training in relation to exceptional needs students (Table 4).

Table 4

Questionnaire on Exceptional Needs Students' Social Skills

Check either pre- or post-implementation.

_____Pre-Implementation _____Post-Implementation

Directions: Circle the answer that correlates most closely with your views for each of the statements below.

		Yes	No
1.	A special education child can begin a conversation with their non-handicapped peers.	23	5
2.	An exceptional needs child can join in playing a game with their non-handicapped peers.	19	9
3.	A student with special needs can share items in the classroom with their nonhandicapped peers.	18	10
4.	An exceptional needs child can express their feelings.	22	6
5.	A special education student can deal with another's (peer or authority) anger.	5	23

(table continues)

		Yes	No
6.	A student with special needs demonstrates appropriate sportsmanship.	16	12
7.	An exceptional child can stay out of fights.	21	7
8.	A special education student can accept consequences.	21	7
9.	A child with special needs can offer help to a classmate.	19	9
10.	An exceptional needs student can apologize.	18	10

Table 4 yields positive views of exceptional needs students' social skills. Post-implementation responses from classroom teachers, 23 of the 28, indicated a significant increase in conversation between a special education child and their nonhandicapped peers. Classroom teachers, 19 of the 28, were observing exceptional needs children joining a game with their nonhandicapped peers. Classroom teachers overwhelmingly noted that an exceptional needs child could express their feelings. Teacher responses further indicated that a student with special needs could demonstrate appropriate sportsmanship. Interestingly, classroom teachers noted that an exceptional needs child could offer help to a classmate within the mainstream. However, the majority

the classroom teachers, 23 of the 28, noted that special education students had difficulty when dealing with a peer's anger. The results indicate the behavioral mastery of social skills topics, in relation to exceptional needs students.

Interviews with classroom teachers were conducted by the writer. Responses suggested that teachers' responses to the questionnaire overwhelmingly supported the positive impact of the use of the social skills training program within their classroom. Informal interviews with classroom teachers were conducted by the writer. Responses also suggested that classroom teachers had gained a level of comfort with the social skills training program and utilization of support staff for implementation or consultation.

Objective 2: It was anticipated at the end of the practicum that nonhandicapped students in the mainstream, would demonstrate an understanding and respect for their handicapped peers. The actual results of the outcome illustrate that 85% of the 430 mainstream nonhandicapped students could demonstrate an understanding and respect for their handicapped peers.

At the completion of the second week of the implementation of the social skills training program teachers began to observe an increase of interaction between nonhandicapped students and their handicapped

peers. As the practicum progressed, teachers and staff could cite daily examples of this heightened interaction between nonhandicapped students and their handicapped peers. Following are examples of observations as reported by classroom teachers. Students would voluntarily read aloud to a nonreading peer. Ambulatory students would assist a physically disabled individual with a lunch tray. Nonhandicapped students would voluntarily ask a handicapped peer if he/she would like to work together on a class project. Nonhandicapped students would approach a handicapped peer at outdoor follow up physical education and ask if they would like to join in a game or activity. Nonhandicapped peers volunteered to be a member of a handicapped student's adaptive physical education follow up class. Nonhandicapped students also volunteered to be part of a language group with severely developmentally delayed children. Two nonhandicapped students participated as mentors for two mild to moderately handicapped students on the regular bus, thus eliminating special education bussing. Observations made by teachers are endless, and rich in compassion and respect for nonhandicapped students and their handicapped peers.

Upon completion of the practicum students were asked to respond verbally to a five item survey on an indvidual basis (see Appendix D).

Table 5

Mainstream Student Survey

Note: These questions are to be given verbally to students on an individual basis and tallied by the teacher.

		Yes	No
1.	I accept people who are different.	85%	15%
2.	I will invite a person who has exceptional needs to join in an activity.	72%	28%
3.	I can respond appropriately when pushed or hit by a handicapped peer.	70%	30%
4.	I can respond to peer pressure appropriately and not tease a child with special needs.	80%	20%
5.	I can play with a child with special needs in my neighborhood.	67%	23%

Table 5 summarizes the responses of 430 mainstream nonhandicapped students in relation to exceptional needs children. Results from the student survey clearly indicate that nonhandicapped students could accept people who are different. Student responses reflected their willingness to invite a person who has exceptional needs to join in an activity. Most mainstream students

indicated that they could respond appropriately when pushed or hit by a handicapped peer. Overwhelmingly students agreed that they could respond to peer pressure appropriately and not tease a child with special needs. Responses to item number five indicated that most nonhandicapped students could play with a child with special needs in their neighborhood. Responses to the survey positively indicate the achievement of the objective.

Objective 3: Identified exceptional needs children would socially interact with their nonhandicapped peers within their community. The actual results of the outcome confer that 18 of the 28 children with exceptional needs did socially interact with their nonhandicapped peers within their community.

At the conclusion of the practicum parents and caregivers of an exceptional needs child were asked to complete a community involvement questionnaire. Table 6 shows evidence that this objective was not achieved.

Table 6

Community Involvement Questionnaire for Parents/Caregivers of Special Education Children

Directions: Please check the activities that your child has participated in during the last eight months.

		Yes	No
1.	Community school classes.	18	10
2.	Community organized sports.	9	19
3.	Boy/Girl Scouts.	2	26
4.	YMCA activities.	1	27
5.	Church activities.	8	20
6.	Attendance at parties with their nonhandicapped peers; i.e. sleep-overs, birthdays, etc.	11	27
7.	Music; i.e. lessons, choir, etc.	1	27
8.	Library activities (community level).	4	24
9.	Playing with other neighborhood peers that are nonhandicapped in their neighborhood.	12	16
10.	"4H" Club.	3	25

The writer received only 28 of the 40 questionnaires that were distributed to parents and caregivers of an exceptional needs child. Although the objective was not achieved in terms of respondents, Table 6 indicates that

exceptional needs children are participating in various community activities and interacting with their nonhandicapped peers in their neighborhood.

Objective 4: All parents and custodial caregivers of a child with special needs would be provided the opportunity to attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings, following the pre-implementation inservice social skills training program, to discuss social concerns of their child. The actual results of the outcome reveal that 8 of the 8 regularly scheduled monthly meetings were conducted to provide all parents and custodial caregivers of a child with special needs the opportunity to discuss any social concerns of their child.

Monthly meetings were held at a regularly scheduled time. The writer recorded the attendance of meeting participants. Attendance of parents and custodial caregivers of a child with special needs was extremely consistent. For the initial meeting 28 participants were present. Much to the surprise of the writer, the same 28 group members consistently attended the succeeding seven sessions. Participants commented on the cohesiveness of the group and the openness to relate any concerns, situations, or problems in regard to the social skills of their child. Certain meetings did evoke tears, laughter, disbelief and encouragement in relation to exceptional

needs children and their social skills. Participants commented to the writer that the meetings were very helpful in that it was a community based support group. The objective was successful.

Objective 5: Families who had children with identified handicapped conditions would become members of a support organization related to their child's disability and would participate in local/state meetings documented by interviews with parents by the writer. Actual results of the outcome portray 0 of the 40 families who had children with identified handicapped conditions chose not to attend or become a member of a support disability organization at the local/state level.

Interviews with parents and caregivers of a child with special needs reported no affiliation with other support organizations in relation to their child's handicapped condition. The objective was not achieved.

Discussion

The evidence examined to determine the effectiveness of the practicum was both qualitative and quantitative. The quality of the social skills activity lessons demonstrated by elementary classroom teachers has strongly influenced the writer's perception of the importance of the implementation of a social skills training program in the elementary classroom to establish social skills for exceptional needs students and their

nonhandicapped peers. The practicum provided long range benefits for all participants, for parents, teachers, students with handicaps, and for nonhandicapped children.

In the writer's opinion, the social skills training program was adequate in determining that the value of the social skills strategies was unquestionably valid. The writer is convinced that theory must be put into practice in an appropriate "action" situation. A review and interpretation of the data collected indicated that individual participation in social skills training activities promotes friendships between exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers. Table 5 reveals that the nonhandicapped students gained insight and knowledge in regard to their acceptance of people who are different and can appropriately interact with a handicapped peer, both in school and their neighborhood.

In review of the data collected the writer never imagined classroom teachers to view exceptional needs students with positive social skills. Table 4 indicated that this practicum was successful in that exceptional needs students could demonstrate appropriate social skills and contribute to an activity. Teacher observations in regard to social interactions between nonhandicapped students and their handicapped peers were phenomenal. Examples of appropriate social integration

between exceptional needs children and their nonhandicapped peers were visible throughout the school.

Success of the practicum could also be viewed in relation to the involvement and participation of parents and caregivers of a child with special needs at the scheduled monthly meetings. The writer never imagined that the meetings would be so well attended by consistent involved participants. It became a tremendous support group for all attendees.

A review and interpretation of the data collected indicated that although all of the goals were not achieved at the levels anticipated, significant improvements were made. It was hoped by the writer that at least 30 of the 40 identified exceptional needs children would have socially interacted with their nonhandicapped peers within their community. The writer had also anticipated that some families who have children with identified handicapped conditions, would become members of a support organization specifically related to their child's disability and would participate in local/state meetings.

This practicum effort has provided the writer a leadership opportunity to provide elementary classroom teachers with a social skills training program to establish social skills for exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers. The writer is excited

that the practicum has had such a positive impact upon staff, parents, and most importantly the children that we teach.

A welcome spin off of the practicum was the support from the writer's supervisor. Probably one of the most important lessons learned during the practicum was that of scheduling. The flexibility in scheduling provided the writer to act not only as a consultant but more importantly it generated a team membership between the realms of special and regular education. Classroom teachers were grateful for the support service that was provided for students in the mainstream. Comments such as "The social skills training program is very useful.", and "Thanks for coming into my classroom." were also evidence of a positive attitude toward the practicum.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the social skills training program to establish social skills for exceptional needs students and their nonhandicapped peers be implemented in the elementary classroom during each fall semester.
2. It is recommended that the social skills training program guide be analyzed and updated on an annual basis.
3. It is recommended that Community Education programs expand opportunities for exceptional needs students.

4. It is recommended to establish regularly scheduled monthly social skills support meetings for parents and caregivers of a special needs child.
5. It is recommended to the special education teacher to provide flexible scheduling for mainstream classroom teachers for consulting.
6. It is recommended to the special education teacher to provide flexible scheduling for classroom teachers to assist with the implementation of social skills activity lessons in the mainstream.

Dissemination

This practicum has been shared with the writer's colleagues. Plans have been made with the writer's special education director for the presentation of this practicum during the winter 1993-1994 inservice for teachers. The writer will share practicum results with other special educators and advocates at the spring 1994, Minnesota Association for Retarded Citizens Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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APPENDIX A

SOCIAL SKILLS SURVEY FOR PARENTS WITH AN EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS CHILD

SOCIAL SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

WITH A CHILD WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

The purpose of this survey is to assess your child's behavior outside of the school environment. Your response will help in determining new program development for the 1992-1993 school year.

Directions: Circle the response that correlates most closely with your views for each of the statements below.

		Yes	No
1.	My child with exceptional needs plays with nonhandicapped peers in the neighborhood.		
2.	My child with exceptional needs demonstrates appropriate social behavior at home.		
3.	My child with exceptional needs participates in community activities, i.e. sports, girl/boy scouts, church groups, other _____.		
4.	My child with exceptional needs, primary leisure activity at home is watching television.		
5.	My exceptional needs child participates in after school activities.		

APPENDIX B

REGULAR EDUCATORS' RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW STATEMENTS, 1991-1992 SCHOOL YEAR

REGULAR EDUCATORS' RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW STATEMENTS,

1991-1992 SCHOOL YEAR

The purpose of this survey is to assess exceptional needs students' social skills behavior. Your response will help to determine new possible program considerations for the 1992-1993 school year.

Directions: Circle the number that correlates most closely with your views for each of the statements below.

		Yes	No
1.	Children with special needs have friends.		
2.	Exceptional children demonstrate appropriate social behavior.		
3.	Nonhandicapped children voluntarily choose a handicapped student for a partner or team activity.		
4.	Exceptional children play with their nonhandicapped peers at recess.		
5.	Exceptional needs students establish social relationships with other peers.		

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE ON EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS' SOCIAL SKILLS

Questionnaire on Exceptional Needs Students' Social Skills

Check either pre- or post-implementation.

_____Pre-Implementation _____Post-Implementation

Directions: Circle the answer that correlates most closely with your views for each of the statements below.

		Yes	No
1.	A special education child can begin a conversation with their non-handicapped peers.		
2.	An exceptional needs child can join in playing a game with their non-handicapped peers.		
3.	A student with special needs can share items in the classroom with their nonhandicapped peers.		
4.	An exceptional needs child can express their feelings.		
5.	A special education student can deal with another's (peer or authority) anger.		
6.	A student with special needs demonstrates appropriate sportsmanship.		
7.	An exceptional child can stay out of fights.		

(appendix continues)

	Yes	No
8. A special education student can accept consequences.		
9. A child with special needs can offer help to a classmate.		
10. An exceptional needs student can apologize.		

APPENDIX D

NONHANDICAPPED STUDENT SURVEY

Mainstream Student Survey

Note: These questions are to be given verbally to students on an individual basis and tallied by the teacher.

		Yes	No
1.	I accept people who are different.		
2.	I will invite a person who has exceptional needs to join in an activity.		
3.	I can respond appropriately when pushed or hit by a handicapped peer.		
4.	I can respond to peer pressure appropriately and not tease a child with special needs.		
5.	I can play with a child with special needs in my neighborhood.		

APPENDIX E

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CHILDREN

Community Involvement Questionnaire for Parents/Caregivers of Special Education Children

Directions: Please check the activities that your child has participated in during the last nine months.

		Yes	No
1.	Community school classes.		
2.	Community organized sports.		
3.	Boy/Girl Scouts.		
4.	YMCA activities.		
5.	Church activities.		
6.	Attendance at parties with their nonhandicapped peers; i.e. sleep-overs, birthdays, etc.		
7.	Music; i.e. lessons, choir, etc.		
8.	Library activities (community level)		
9.	Playing with other neighborhood peers that are nonhandicapped in their neighborhood.		
10.	"4H" Club.		

APPENDIX F

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

Social Skills Training Program

Topic 1: Friendship.

Skill: Accepting and getting along with people who are different.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 2: Friendship.

Skill: Introducing oneself.

Activity: Discussion, modeling, and role-playing.

Topic 3: Friendship.

Skill: Initiating conversation with peers.

Activity: Discussion, modeling, and role-playing.

Topic 4: Friendship.

Skill: Ending a conversation with peers.

Activity: Discussion, modeling, and role-playing.

Topic 5: Friendship.

Skill: Joining an activity or group.

Activity: Discussion, modeling, and playing leisure games.

Topic 6: Friendship.

Skill: Accepting peer's suggestions for group activities.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 7: Friendship.

Skill: Cooperating with peers.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 8: Friendship.

Skill: Volunteering to help peers with a classroom activity.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 9: Friendship.

Skill: Giving a compliment to a peer.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 10: Friendship.

Skill: Accepting a compliment from a peer.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 11: Friendship.

Skill: Sharing personal/school materials with other peers.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 12: Friendship.

Skill: Apologizing to a peer or person of authority.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 13: Friendship.

Skill: Asking for help or assistance from a peer.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 14: Cooperation.

Skill: Ignoring distractions from peers when doing class work.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 15: Cooperation.

Skill: Making appropriate transitions from one activity to another with disrupting peers.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 16: Cooperation.

Skill: Maintaining a neat and clean desk work area.

Activity: Discussion.

Topic 17: Cooperation.

Skill: Making an appropriate choice and managing free time.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 18: Cooperation.

Skill: Following teacher's instructions.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 19: Cooperation.

Skill: Using time appropriately while waiting for help.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 20: Feelings.

Skill: Knowing your feelings.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 21: Feelings.

Skill: Expressing and recognizing feelings.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 22: Feelings.

Skill: Feeling sorry for others when bad things happen to them.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 23: Aggression.

Skill: Responding to peer pressure.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 24: Aggression.

Skill: Dealing with your anger.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 25: Aggression.

Skill: Dealing with peer's anger.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 26: Aggression.

Skill: Responding to teasing from peers.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 27: Aggression.

Skill: Avoiding trouble with others.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 28: Aggression.

Skill: Using self-control.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 29: Aggression.

Skill: Responding appropriately when hit or pushed by other peers.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 30: Stress.

Skill: Display appropriate sportsmanship after the game.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 31: Stress.

Skill: Responding to failure.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.

Topic 32: Stress.

Skill: Being left out of an activity or group.

Activity: Discussion and role-playing.